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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN, KOIZUMI CABINET
RESHUFFLE

1. Summary: As major Chinese-language Taipei dailies continued November 5-7 to dig up more scandals related to the shady recruitment practices regarding the Kaohsiung mass rapid transit system, coverage also focused on the year-end 3-in-1 elections, the Government Information Office's row with TVBS, cross-strait tourism exchanges, and the funeral of KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou's father. Several newspapers reported on November 5 in their inside pages TECRO Chief David Lee's statement that the U.S. government had actively expressed concerns over the GIO-TVBS dispute. The centrist "China Times" also carried the remarks by Premier Frank Hsieh at the Legislative Yuan last Friday in response to an inquiry about Washington's concerns. Hsieh was quoted as saying the United States will respect Taiwan's implementation of its domestic law and that "Taiwan does not need to ask for Washington's instructions" or change its policy because of the U.S. attitude. The pro-unification "United Daily News," on the other hand, spent its entire page three on November 7 reviewing Taiwan's economic situation over the past five years and posing a question of how long Taiwan's people will have to suffer given the island's poor economic performance.

2. Most newspapers continued to editorialize on the local scandals. An editorial in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" discussed Washington's concerns over the TVBS dispute as well as its connection to Taiwan's democracy and freedom. The article urged the Taiwan government to clarify the dispute with Washington and communicate with the United States about how to jointly defend their strategic interests of freedom and democracy. One editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification English-language "China Post" and an opinion piece in the limited-circulation, pro-independence English-language "Taipei Times" both discussed the cabinet reshuffle in Japan. The "China Post" editorial expressed a pessimistic outlook for China-Japan relations, and the "Taipei Times" article urged Taiwan to avoid any wishful thinking about Japan. End summary.

1. U.S.-Taiwan

"Let's Talk about Taiwan's Democracy and Freedom"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] wrote in an editorial (11/7):

"Taiwan's representative to the United States, David Lee, said the other day that U.S. officials had expressed concerns to him about the TVBS incident. Lee said he had clarified the situation with the United States after receiving relevant instructions from the Taipei government. According to Lee, Washington expressed concerns over the incident because [it believes that] the incident might affect the United States' strategic interests, which, [according to Washington,] also include democracy and freedom.

"This newspaper is not sure whether or not Washington's concerns over this incident are related to the pan-Blue's speaking ill [of the Government Information Office] to the United States. But since Lee said Washington expressed concerns over the incident because it involved strategic interests such as democracy and freedom, this newspaper believes that the government should not only clarify the incident, but also communicate with Washington how to defend the joint strategic interests like democracy and freedom. .

". Justice will be served as long as Taiwan democracy and freedom continue to thrive, allowing the 23 million people to determine their future and allowing Taiwan to become a fully normal country. Some countries said they are concerned about Taiwan's democracy and freedom, but they are unwilling to recognize Taiwan's sovereign status due to bluffing from totalitarian China. These countries, when it comes to the implementation of democracy and freedom, only use a red line to frame Taiwan or adopt a double standard toward Taiwan. Will it meet the United States' strategic

interests if Taiwan people start to question their moves?"

12. Koizumi Cabinet Reshuffle

A) "Yasukuni Dims Prospects for Better Sino-Japan Ties"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] said in an editorial (11/5):

"It seems that Beijing-Tokyo relations, which have never been smooth in the past five years, will face a tough ride in the future when Japan's hawkish prime minister Junichiro Koizumi steps down next year and hands the reins to another hard-line successor.

"The reason for this downbeat view is not difficult to see. Standing in the way of improved relations between the two Asian giants is the 'Yasukuni issue' - a shrine that houses 14 Class-A war criminals of World War II that Koizumi has visited five times in as many years as prime minister, in disregard of Beijing's protests against such visits that they regard as a gesture to justify Japan's war of aggression. .

". [A] recent poll in Japan showed that 48 percent of Japanese were in favor of Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni, compared with 45 percent who were against. The mass-circulation Sankei Shimbun said Beijing's resort to suing the 'history card' has proved useless. Therefore, it can be anticipated that Koizumi's successor will follow the footsteps of his predecessor.

"Beijing, however, is unlikely to abandon the 'history card.' On the contrary, Beijing regards the Yasukuni issue as a prerequisite for improving Sino-Japanese relations. Beijing, in the face of a popular anti-Japan sentiment, is unlikely to beat a retreat. Likewise, Japan's next government of hard-line conservatives seems certain to take a get-tough-on-China stance. With the support of public opinion, Japan's hawks will resist outside pressure from Beijing and Seoul and continue their bold march to the shrine, casting a dark shadow on their mutual ties."

B) "Avoid Wishful Thinking on Japan"

Tsai Zheng-jia, Assistant Research Fellow at the Institute

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of International Relations of National Chengchi University, commented in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (11/7):

"Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi recently carried out the third and most extensive Cabinet reshuffle of his team. Among the 14 new members, nine of them are members of the pro-Taiwan Japan-ROC Diet Members' Consultative Council - the highest number ever. .

"From that observation we can draw the following conclusions. First, Japan's tilt toward the US is not necessarily a tilt toward Taiwan. After Koizumi came to power, he has always followed the US anti-terror policy and strategic arrangement in East Asia, while gradually changing Japan's domestic defense policy to fit the new US policy. Japan mostly focuses on defense against North Korea and China. But this does not mean that Taiwan has already been included in the umbrella of US-Japan security cooperation, or that Tokyo will get involved if a war breaks out in the Taiwan Strait. Thus, Japan's pro-US policy is only a result of its concern about its homeland security.

"Second, being tough does not necessarily mean being anti-China. After Koizumi came to power, Japan has replaced its cautious and fearful attitude toward China with a tougher diplomatic line. . But this does not mean that Tokyo wants to fight against Beijing or compete with it for a dominant role.

"Finally, being anti-China does not necessarily equate with being pro-Taiwan. . Therefore, we have to break away from our old thinking and myths about Taiwan-Japan relations in the post-Koizumi era, and throw away unrealistic expectations of the Japanese government. This is the only way for us to avoid wishful thinking about Japan."

KEEGAN